



Request for Council/Committee Action from the Office of City Clerk

Date: March 29, 2012

To: The Hon. Cam Gordon, Chair
Elections Committee

Subject: Designating boundaries of election precincts

Recommendation: Adopt a resolution approving a precinct plan for the City of Minneapolis, and establishing the boundaries of election precincts within the several wards.

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Presenters in Committee: Casey Joe Carl, City Clerk

Background: Pursuant to the requirements of Minnesota Statutes §204B.14, subd. 3(d), and consistent with the provisions of Minneapolis City Charter, Chapter 2 §7, the City Council is responsible for establishing voting precincts within the city's thirteen wards. By law, precinct boundaries must be re-established after each decennial census within 60 days of the date when the State Legislature completes its redistricting plans or by no later than 19 weeks before the date of the state primary election in a year ending in two, whichever comes first. The state's 2012 primary is scheduled for Tuesday, August 14; thus, the deadline to establish precincts is Tuesday, April 3, 2012. On March 7, the Clerk's Office submitted a preliminary precinct plan for review and discussion purposes. Since that time, staff worked with individual Council Members to refine those initial precinct boundaries. The final plan—as proposed—reflects the combined efforts of Council Members and staff to establish voting precincts within the confines dictated by state, ward, and park boundaries with a minimum of disruption and/or change for voters as possible.

Financial Impact: As part of its approved 2012 budgetary reduction plan, the Clerk's Office is reducing the number of precincts—from 131 precincts to 117 precincts. This is anticipated to result in a savings of about \$30,000. The Clerk's Office has attempted to "harmonize" the number of precincts in each ward to achieve the greatest level of consistency between and among precincts while still accommodating deviation where required.

Community Impact: The precinct is the lowest sub-unit of government in the United States. Precincts are essentially voting districts, based on prescribed geographic boundaries, within which those residents who are qualified voters may participate in the electoral process. Generally, each precinct has a specific polling place where election-related activities are conducted. Because of this basic connection to voting, many residents have strong ties and associations with their precincts and/or polling places. Consequently, the Clerk's Office has attempted to draw new precinct boundaries with the fewest changes possible—including assigned precinct numbers, boundaries (where possible), and potential polling place locations.

Supporting Documentation: See attached draft resolution and proposed precinct maps.